

Village Playhouse of Wauwatosa Original One Act Festival History



In 1984 the Village Playhouse of Wauwatosa Board of Directors was presented with a proposal. A group known as the Third Coast Playwrights was looking for a venue to present some of its work. The VPW was looking for a reward for its season ticket holders and the Mini-Theatre Players of Wauwatosa were looking for a means to produce the winners in a play writing contest they had held the year before. The proposal? – a festival of original one act plays. Thus the First Annual Original One Act Festival was born. The reaction was positive on several fronts:

- The playwrights were happy; they had a chance to see their work on stage.
- The audiences were happy; they saw plays that no one else had ever had a chance to see.
- The VPW was happy, they had managed to serve two different constituencies and put a few dollars in the coffers while doing it.

Over the years the festival has gone through a number of changes. Originally the festival had two different sets of show presented on different nights. That format was eventually dropped when the production logistics became overwhelming. The search for scripts now extends to playwrights throughout the entire state of Wisconsin.

Despite the changes, the spirit has remained the same. It's still a forum to give both new and experienced playwrights and directors a chance to practice and hone their respective crafts. And while the production values have increased, the goal is still to emphasize the writing and performance aspects, not make a show into a technical spectacle.

One act plays have become more popular in Milwaukee over the years as can be seen by the number of on the "One Act Festivals" that have been, and continue to be, produced at both the community and professional level. The VPW is proud to have been the first (and we like to think the best) to implement the concept of an original one act play festival.